

## **Town Meeting Coordinating Committee**

Meeting of Wednesday, June 30, 2010

Bangs Community Center, Room 101

**Attendance:** Peggy Roberts, Nonny Burack, Adrienne Terrizzi, Rob Crowner, Mary Streeter, Harry Brooks, Carol Gray (departed 5:27). Guests (4:42 - 5:40): Harrison Gregg, Aaron Hayden.

**1. Call to order:** Peggy calls the meeting to order at 4:42pm.

**2. ACTV meeting report:** Adrienne reports that a number of recommendations emerged from her and Harry's meeting with Jim Lescault, itself prompted by concerns about the Middle School auditorium sound system raised in comments on the electronic voting survey. The problem may be the result of radio frequency interference with wireless microphones. Harrison observes that people will not be willing to give up using laptops or texting without clear evidence that these things are affecting the sound system. Aaron speculates that the ACTV mixing board may not be properly grounded and that ACTV's equipment is not being used properly. Adrienne states that there is a problem with the public address system at the school, which would be the responsibility of the school to fix. Harry observes that the question of who will pay for improvements is at the heart of the problem.

Adrienne receives encouragement from the committee to continue meeting with ACTV and other interested parties, including town and school IT staff.

**3. Electronic voting survey:** Harrison agrees that Fall 2010 is probably too early for an electronic voting initiative, and Aaron agrees that another -- ideally smoother -- demonstration should be held.

Harry states that the company he brought in a few years ago would be willing to do another demonstration. It is interested in breaking into the town government market. Mary advises picking the best option first before bringing another demonstration to Town Meeting. Aaron states that the major difference between systems is typically in the reporting software.

Mary does not think that the survey reached all members of Town Meeting and also would like the survey to be put together more carefully. Aaron states that another survey may not be necessary because a proposal could be assembled to address all of the concerns raised in the comments of the first survey. Nonny states that a survey should be distributed to all members, preferably in the packet before Town Meeting.

Adrienne states that more information should be gathered, such as time currently spent on voting, and an interim report presented to Fall Town Meeting. Mary states that the number of tally votes, standing votes, etc. can be determined by examining the results of warrants available on the town website.

Peggy reports that she spoke with Alan Reiss, who is interested in coming to Amherst to discuss electronic voting with the committee. He concedes that electronic voting may not be appropriate for Amherst, but adoption here would aid his cause in Wayland. Harrison states that Brookline and Framingham have both considered electronic voting. Harrison has been asked to participate in a panel at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Moderators Association and promises to bring back some information from a committee that is studying it.

With regard to practical considerations in the use of electronic voting, Carol states that short response times could allow electronic voting to be used for many Town Meeting votes, including motions for the previous question. Aaron advises focusing on next steps rather than individual merits of electronic voting. Carol agrees that a potential electronic voting proposal should be postponed for at least a year because of the difficult budget situation. Mary recommends experimenting with cost-saving measures first, such as cutting back on the printing of tally cards.

Rob suggests establishing one or more subcommittees to begin working on outstanding issues. Adrienne moves to form one subcommittee to gather additional information relevant to the electronic voting issue and one subcommittee to evaluate available systems. Committees could include members of town staff who would have to use any system adopted and volunteers from Town Meeting. The motion passes by a vote of 6-1. Adrienne, Mary, and Rob agree to serve on the information-gathering subcommittee, known as TMCC Subcommittee #1. Carol points out that subcommittees will have to post meetings and meet in public session.

At the committee's request, Mary will post the committee's survey report summary, appendices, and both together at the TMCC webpage.

**4. Minutes of June 15 meeting:** Adrienne moves, Nonny seconds, and the committee approves the minutes of June 15, 2010 with minor amendments.

**5. Meeting schedule:** The committee establishes the following meeting schedule for the Fall:

- Thursday, August 12 at 4:30 in the Diana Romer Room at Town Hall;
- Tuesday, August 24 (room to be reserved from 3:00 for subcommittee meeting);
- Tuesday, September 7 and Tuesday, September 21;
- Tuesdays, October 5, 12, 19, and 26.

The committee establishes the following event schedule for the Fall:

- Warrant Review: Thursday, October 21;
- Bus Tour: Sunday, October 24;
- Precinct Meetings: October 25 through November 4 (Town Meeting begins November 8).

The committee agrees to hold its next informational forum in late January.

**6. Adjournment:** The meeting is adjourned at 6:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Crowner

Documents distributed at the meeting:

1. agenda
2. draft minutes of 6/15 meeting
3. meeting notes from 6/25 subcommittee meeting with ACTV
4. electronic voting survey report
5. Sandra Burgess memo about new Open Meeting Law, with Kopelman and Paige attachment